

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the House Education and Career Readiness Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. I testified here just about 3 years ago on a previous education bill. At that time, I shared with you my experiences as a parent in the NY public schools with CC and RTTT. NY had implemented CC two years before Ohio and my children's elementary school was a pilot school. I shared with you what it did to my community and to the relationships between teachers, administrators, school boards, parents, students and our elected representatives. It was my hope that Ohio would avoid the tumult of the newest Federal mandates and that Ohio's school children would be spared the chaos and consequences.

Since then, I've been in touch with hundreds of parents throughout NE Ohio through our "parents helping parents get the facts" presentations as well as information sharing through social media. Additionally, I was honored to be appointed as the parent representative to the 2015 Standards Review Committee for Social Studies. I would like to share some of that experience with you today as it greatly informs my opinion of and support for HB 176.

I spent a full year carefully reading and reviewing Ohio's Learning Standards for Social Studies, the aligned assessments and the associated state-written Model Curriculum. While technically not part of the CCSS, the process and rubric employed was the same for all of the standards review committees. As you are aware, Ohio Revised Code only asked us to comment on specific items with regard to each standard. A very close read of the model curriculum was an integral part of the process. The rubric had no place to directly identify whether the reviewer thought that the standards, in their entirety, were of high quality and complete. Of the 10 criteria, 4 of them, in my opinion, should not have been subjective to the opinion of the committee. But, rather, they should have been evidence based. These criteria included whether the standard promoted college and career readiness, whether it reduced the need for remediation, whether it met the definition of a standard and whether it promoted higher student performance. The final report for our committee basically concluded that the "elements" reviewed for grades K-12 "generally met the criteria". (<http://>

[education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Ohios-Learning-Standards/Academic-Standards-Review-Committees/Standards-and-Assessment-Committee-Report-2-5-16-FINAL.pdf.aspx](http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Ohios-Learning-Standards/Academic-Standards-Review-Committees/Standards-and-Assessment-Committee-Report-2-5-16-FINAL.pdf.aspx)). This was greatly disappointing to me, as after a year of review, this was the best the Ohio parents would get: “generally meets the criteria”. As I wrote in my summary of the experience for the final documentation, an RV generally meets the criteria for a place one can live, but that doesn’t mean one would choose to do so.

Perhaps the most important thing I learned was how the model curriculum works in Ohio schools. I was surprised to see that it promoted behavioral and social and emotional content. Most parents take great concern with the addition of what is being called “social and emotional learning” into our academic standards.

I also discovered that the model curriculum, which contains highly detailed “content elaborations” and “expectations for learning” is used to write the assessment questions. ORC 3301.079 clearly states that Ohio school districts are not required to use any part of it. However, it also states that the state assessments must align with the model curriculum. How is it that Ohio law can codify the protection of a district’s right not to have to use a state-written model curriculum, but then also require that same school to administer high-stakes tests based on it? It seems our teachers are being told, “you are free to teach your way”, but the performance ratings of you and your school will be based on “teaching our way”. And, as teaching materials become increasingly digital dependent, parents and teachers continue to be pushed out of the picture.

This leads to my next point about the correlation between digital learning and data protection for our children. The following is one of the primary objectives documented by the Department of Labor regarding their Workforce Data Quality Initiative: “Enable workforce data to be matched with education data to ultimately create longitudinal data systems with individual-level information beginning with pre-kindergarten through post-secondary schooling all the way through entry and sustained participation in the workforce and employment services system.” (<https://www.doleta.gov/performance/workforcedataquality.cfm>)

In simpler terms, the DOL is working in parallel with the DOE to develop and maintain a national *individual level* database that follows our children from pre-natal care to retirement. For additional documentation and greater detail as to how the information is gathered and maintained in Ohio, please refer to Ohio's RTTT applications. (<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/phase1-applications/ohio.pdf>) (<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/phase2-applications/ohio.pdf>)

{Parents across the state, and country, have woken to the shocking and greatly disappointing reality that their children's data is being mined and/or used for purposes which they have neither been notified of nor have authorized.}

We're learning more everyday about what kind of information is being derived from our children, and how and why it is being used. (National Education Data Model) (<https://nces.ed.gov/datalab/>)

We also know that more and more schools are using apps that track personal characteristics of our children, their behavior, their personal preferences and in some cases, administering surveys without notifying parents or requesting their permission to do so. Some apps being used locally and causing controversy include Class DoJo, a behavior tracking app, Bus Tracker apps, which maintain information with regard to children's bus transportation and schedule, and Naviance, a college and career counseling and college application system. Regarding the data gathered in Naviance, a local mom and expert on this kind of data-mining tells me that based on her professional knowledge and her research on the software, that "the survey is very intimate into the inner workings of personality and lumps the kids into one of several hundred clusters based on common responses". Naviance also clusters kids according to personality type and then suggests careers based on that. Despite the best efforts of many parents, there is still no transparency with regard to how and when colleges receive and manage this information. {One parent is considering legal action against her son's school on the matter. Her legal counsel has told her she has a very strong case.}

We know that the assessment industry is moving away from traditional year-end assessments to competency based and gaming software that instructs and assesses at almost the same time. (Cogs in the Machine, Pioneer

Institute, May 2014) (<http://mobile.wnd.com/2015/03/orwellian-nightmare-unleashed-on-schoolkids/>) We know that computer based education is being pushed through both private (Google Chromebooks are everywhere!) and public organizations (ORC mandating the expensive technology be used for assessment purposes) as a way to deliver instruction to our children with minimal teacher involvement. {Tech grants for schools throughout the state are examples of this. A tech grant application for Battelle, completed by the school district in which I reside, clearly states “we will also see a reduction in the number of full-time teachers that are needed for our building....students will be given the opportunity to take courses on-line .....thus eliminating the need for face to face instruction”. }

We know that all of these digital learning platforms are capable of gathering millions of data points on not only our children's cognitive skills, but their non-cognitive skills, attitudes and characteristics and in fact, the DOE has been working toward this goal for years. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lr7Z7ysDluQ>) (Promoting Grit, Tenacity & Perseverance, USED, p.viii) We know that much of this technology is also designed to gather and assess our children’s social and emotional characteristics. We know that this data is being used to formulate algorithms that will dictate how and what our children are taught. These algorithms will also dictate the track that our children will be placed on, college or career, with minimal input from parents in many cases. {These choices will be voluntary until they are not. It is a fact that the United States education system is unique among similar nations as a child’s college or career path is still influenced by the expressed desires of the student and their parents. However, those who study ‘ed tech’ and the future of our education system tell us college and career tracking as employed in most other countries like Russia, China, Germany, Australia to name a few, will be controlled more and more by centralized sources.}

{The American educational system was the best in the world as it has given birth to more life enhancing and life saving ideas, technology, and medicine than that of any other country in the world. The American education system has been successful because it was based on the idea that schools are locally run, diverse places of learning based on the values of the community that they serve and that who our children are is more important than what job they will have. }

Parents are partners in our children's education, not just consumers of it. The current workforce driven school model assumes that I had my children for economic reasons. It assumes that I am ok turning over my child's future to a computer algorithm and a bunch of folks in (respectfully) Columbus and DC and Silicon Valley who claim to know better than I what is right for my child.

Technology is not a bad thing. Supplementing traditional education methods with forms of technology is a fantastic way to peak the academic interest of all children and provides a way to see the world that most of us in this room did not have.

That being said, every time you and I touch our laptop or mobile device, we leave behind a valuable footprint that data companies and marketers are chomping at the bit for. This is true of our young children and our teenagers too. As our children's education continues to be outsourced to computers and application software companies, millions of pieces of very profitable and very powerful data are generated. These public/private partnerships are profiting from "studying" our children and/or using the data in ways in which we have not authorized. If an individual, unknown to you, from some company came into your child's school and sat down with a pencil and paper and followed your child around all day, every day....even while doing their homework on-line at home and kept track of how your child behaved, how they performed on their digital learning platforms, what they searched and read about on their devices, and then asked them questions about their likes and dislikes and played games with them to determine their "Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)" status and then gave some of that information to the state maintained individual file on your child, who then gave some of it to DOL for the individual level database that they are maintaining on your child and then sold other parts of that information to potential post-secondary institutions that your child might attend or future employers....would you allow that? of course not! it's creepy and invasive and a violation of your children's and family's privacy! {It could perhaps even be considered harassment because it was happening everyday and without your consent. }Would you tolerate that your school didn't tell you about the classroom guests and what they were doing? This is exactly what is being done on-line by faceless, nameless

corporations and complex algorithms in partnership with our schools and government agencies. It's unacceptable. Digital learning is quietly removing the parent from the education landscape.

This is why we are speaking out. We never approved the use of the workforce based, non-evidence based common core standards in our schools. They are the foundation in the "Jenga game" of our multi-faceted education and data-gathering system.

As you are aware, the ODE recently completed a Standards Revision process for Math and ELA. Much of the process employed was the same as with the Standards Review committees, and as with the SRC's, their work resulted in "minimal to modest" changes to the standards. This according to the ODE's "Revisions Highlights" document. (<https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Ohios-Learning-Standards/Standard-Revision-Overview/Standards-Revision-English-Language-Arts-and-Mathe/ELA-Learning-Standards-Revisions-Highlights.pdf.aspx>) (<https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Ohios-Learning-Standards/Standard-Revision-Overview/Standards-Revision-English-Language-Arts-and-Mathe/ELA-Learning-Standards-Revisions-Highlights.pdf.aspx>) {After reviewing the comparison document for myself, this might even be an over statement.}

There was much chatter on social media among parent groups just before the standards were to be voted on by the State Board of Education. One teacher in fact, who was on the committee for ELA, claimed that the Ohio Learning Standards for Math and ELA that were being revised were not Common Core to begin with. She also claimed that the revision process had significantly changed the standards. When one of our most informed parents posted otherwise, after some banter about the legitimacy of what the informed parent had posted, the teacher threatened legal action ~ on behalf of the ODE. She implied that she had some extension of authority from the department since she was on the committee and posted that the Department's legal team would be investigating this parent for lying about Ohio's standards.

Now, I know this is a crazy and unique situation ~ but it goes to the amount of misinformation that is out there, still ~ whether out of ignorance or with malicious intent probably depends.

So, both the parent and I, on separate occasions during the course of this social media discussion, went directly to Jim Wright, the Director of the Office of Curriculum and Assessment. I've attached email communications with Mr. Wright from February 12, 2017 and March 3, 2017 in which he clearly confirms that Ohio's Learning Standards for Math & ELA are indeed the Common Core State Standards adopted in 2010. He also confirmed that no changes had been made to them until this most recent revision process. And, as I noted a few minutes ago, in the ODE's own words, the revisions resulted in "minimal to modest" changes.

This is very important to get on the record as this teacher is not the only one out there telling parents that Common Core is not being used in Ohio's schools. I would hate for this significant piece of misinformation or fake news to be used as a reason not to seriously consider and debate the two education bills going through your committee that would authentically repeal the Common Core State Standards in Ohio, return some control to the state's parents and take a stab at the data beast that is consuming our children's education.

Parents are not just against too many tests or how much time they take. That is misinformation too. We are against the use of any high-stakes assessments, whether performed at the end of year, or everyday within the devices our children's are using at school and at home. {We are against our children and teachers being used in a national data-gathering experiment.} We are against eliminating face to face instruction in favor of face to screen. We are in favor of our children being allowed to be children, not psychoanalyzed or profiled by their chrome books without our permission. (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/have-you-seen-juniors-psych-profile-1494286467>) Our children deserve to grow up without a government maintained record of their childhood and adolescence. Would you want your future to have been defined by that glimpse of your life?

{We are speaking out because no one cares more about any child in the Ohio schools than their parents. We are speaking out because we have been made to feel like evil outsiders who couldn't possibly know what is best for our children and who don't deserve a seat at the table.

While teachers and government officials are busy pointing fingers at each other and placing blame, those who are the most vested, parents, are begging to be listened to...and while this education chaos continues, the education and futures of millions of children are being damaged, some perhaps irreparably. This can not be tolerated. Each one of us should feel shame and regret over the mess that has been created.}

The good news is that thanks to the efforts and passion of many good people, there are 2 education bills to consider. At this point, it would be irresponsible, neglectful, immoral and perhaps even criminal to ignore the concerns of parents regarding their right to be an informed and engaged partner in the education and privacy protection of their children.

While I am here today to offer support for HB 176, I am in support of all efforts to repair our broken education system that focus on local control, parental rights and the protection our children's data. The world has changed and so must the way in which we protect our children.

{I think its important to repeat that we are not just the customer, we in fact don't just share in the responsibility of providing the best education we can for our children, it *is* our responsibility. Our public schools exist to support us in that effort. ([www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCODE-2011-title20/pdf/](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCODE-2011-title20/pdf/))

We have the legal right to share in the decisions made about how and what our children are taught. } The locally elected school board was supposed to be accountable to those who elected them. But that contract has been broken. We still elect them, but they are no longer accountable to us. Ask any school board member to or ask any parent who has tried for the last few years to affect change in their school by attending school board meetings, and both will tell you that local school boards are more accountable to the State Board of Ed, the Ohio Dept of Ed and ultimately the Dept of Ed than to those who elected them. {Parents must be made partners again in education. You have the ability to restore this broken relationship. }

Specifically regarding HB 176, I support much in this bill including elimination of the data-tagged, unproven, work-force skill based common core standards and aligned assessments. I support moving from a high-

stakes criterion referenced test to a more equitable and non-political norm referenced test.

I support the elimination of state written model curriculum. In fact, I think it is a critical piece of the bill. The model curriculum amounts to a government sponsored curriculum, a de facto state script; and discourages teachers from infusing lessons with their own experience and creativity; something that parents used to expect. {and look forward to year to year. Now, its all the same, every day, every class, every school, every year. }

I support minimizing year end assessments to the minimum as dictated by Federal education law.

I support eliminating the retention provision for third graders under what is known as the third grading reading guarantee. {While the intent of this directive might have been good, we now know as} studies show that retaining a student for this reason alone, at this age, does damage to the student's future growth (and that promoting them and enrolling the child in specialized intervention services is the more successful path for the child.)

I support, and bet you'll have a tough time finding any parent who wouldn't support, the elimination of the 4 pathways to graduation that exist above and beyond the student adequately passing all course requirements as directed by the state. Studies show that a student's GPA is more indicative of their ability to be successful after high school than the results of a standardized test.

I support elimination of the end-of-course exams; these AIR assessments only encourage the 'teach to the test' mentality. Parents disdain these end-of-course exams ~ and not just because of the time they take, but because they directly and negatively affect the quality of education that their child is receiving, because they are high-stakes and because they are part of the data-gathering and tracking machine that they oppose.

I support the elimination of the OTES and OPES as they too are the result of federal over reach into the evaluation of each community's teachers and administrators. {And, it too is part of the data-gathering and tracking machine dictated in RTTT. }

I support making the career advising policy permissive instead of mandatory for our schools. This goes to the heart of my argument from earlier. What is the education about? {Is education about who our children are or what job they will have?} Are you aware that within the social studies model curriculum, second graders are encouraged to ask guests on career day about salary and credentials required for their job?

I support the addition of a digital learning provision that would require schools to be transparent with parents as to what applications, e-textbooks and gaming platforms are being used within their child's school, for each grade.

I hope that everything that I've shared with you today helps to underscore the urgent need to recognize that in the "21st century" classroom, the standards for how schools communicate with parents about the digital tools they employ must be updated. {I like to think of this as the "21st century" version of the "curriculum review committees" that existed prior to RTTT. Parents always had representation on these committees.} By including full disclosure on the type of digital applications and systems that will be used in the classroom and school buildings in general, we are giving parents the tools and information they need and deserve to engage effectively with their locally elected school boards.

In closing, the economy drives education, education does not drive the economy. (International Test Rankings and Student Academic Performance: It's the Economy Stupid by Christopher H. Tienken, EdD Associate Professor, Seton Hall University, Department of Education Leadership, Management & Policy, pdf attached. [Defying Standardization: Creating Curriculum for an Uncertain Future](#) by Christopher H. Tienken)

You have the ability to affect both in our state. I hope you will consider this as you decide future education legislation. A thriving economy drives education because as children see their parents working and succeeding, they see opportunity for themselves and the potential for a bright and successful future of their own; they are naturally encouraged to work hard and pursue new and higher opportunities for education and job training, by their own choice. Now there is something to psychoanalyze and profile. :-)

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the House Education and Career Readiness Committee, thank you very much for your attention and for the opportunity to speak on behalf of HB 176 and for so many parents throughout state. I will do my best to answer any questions you may have.

Lisa Cagigas Johnson  
10875 Stella Lane  
Chagrin Falls, OH 44023

james.wright@education.ohio.gov

February 12, 2017 at 7:04 PM



To: Lisa Johnson

RE: question re:standards revision process

Ms. Johnson,

In 2010, Ohio adopted the Common Core State Standards for mathematics and English language arts as part of Ohio's Learning Standards for all content areas. The revision process started with these standards as their base and this is the first revision of the standards since they were adopted in 2010.

Jim Wright  
Director, Office of Curriculum and Assessment

[See More from Lisa Johnson](#)

Lisa Johnson

February 11, 2017 at 5:46 PM



To: james.wright@education.ohio.gov  
question re:standards revision process

Sent - iCloud

Good evening Mr. Wright,

I am currently reviewing information provided on the ODE website regarding the pending revision to Ohio's Learning Standards and wonder if you can clarify something for me. There seems to be some confusion regarding the starting point for the revision process. Are Ohio's current standards for Math & ELA, adopted in June of 2010, the same as the original Common Core State Standards also adopted by 45 other states through the Race to the Top initiative? Is this the first revision to those standards since they were adopted?

Thank you!

Lisa Johnson  
Auburn Twp., OH

**From:** "[james.wright@education.ohio.gov](mailto:james.wright@education.ohio.gov)" <[james.wright@education.ohio.gov](mailto:james.wright@education.ohio.gov)>  
**Subject: Follow up**  
**Date:** March 3, 2017 at 1:52:37 PM EST  
**To:**  
**Cc:** "[brian.roget@education.ohio.gov](mailto:brian.roget@education.ohio.gov)" <[brian.roget@education.ohio.gov](mailto:brian.roget@education.ohio.gov)>

Ms. Hendrickx,

Please see my responses embedded below. Please let me know if you have additional questions.

Jim Wright  
Director, Office of Curriculum and Assessment

-----Original Message-----

From:  
Sent: Friday, March 03, 2017 10:23 AM  
To: Wright, James <[james.wright@education.ohio.gov](mailto:james.wright@education.ohio.gov)>  
Subject: Follow up

Mr. Wright,

Thank you for speaking with me last week.

I'd like to clarify some confusion regarding Ohio's Learning Standards.

1. Are Ohio's current standards for Math and ELA the Common Core State Standards that were adopted in 2010?

Yes, in June of 2010 Ohio adopted the Learning Standards for Mathematics, English Language Arts, Science and Social Studies. The ELA and math standards adopted were the common core standards, the science and social studies were Ohio developed standards.

2. Had any changes been made to these standards prior to the revisions approved by the State Board in February 2017?

No

3. Will any of the revisions approved in February 2017 require the AIR tests to be re-written and re-validated?

ODE and educator committees will be reviewing the AIR blueprints and Item specifications to determine what changes are needed to reflect the revisions to the standards. Sincerely,

